Psalm 40
Mat 15

For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister and mother.

Mat. 12. 50

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This and some kindred passages have been said to evince in Jesus a lack of what is called natural affection. Indeed it does appear at first blush that he was at times almost an unnatural son & brother. - When told that his mother and brethren desired to speak with him, he pointed to his disciples and said in what I doubt not has impressed many as a very unfeeling way. These are my mother and brethren. - - When at the marriage in Cana, ~~His~~ his mother addressed to him a seemingly very harmless remark, Jesus turned upon her somewhat sharply saying - Woman what have I to do with thee?

I have always suspected that behind these sayings lies something in the nature of a domestic tragedy. - Possibly the thrifty parents of Jesus were distrustful of the results of his mission, and inclined to believe that he might better

2 cling to his fathers business. I know it seems sacrilege & in the face of all the beautiful imagery and poetry with which the Holy Family has been invested, to hint that the young Prophet of Gods Word first found skepticism and opposition in the bosom of his own family.- Still I do venture to say that many passages in the Gospel suggest the possibility of such a fact to my mind.- I am inclined to believe that the first heroic act of Jesus' life - was in breaking away from the ties of blood relation-ship - facing the tradition which made a son almost the slave of his father, to take up the work toward which the spirit impelled him. The Gospels are full of such unconscious hints at unexpressed facts and scenes. That is one proof of their genuineness. The Author of a fiction would not leave these dark sayings without an explanation.- The boy reader

It is so with the
sentence, Woman what ~~at thou to me~~, seems
as it stands utterly a variance with the character
of christ, and we are left to grope for its
explanation.- One of the most probable interpretations
seems to me, that between Jesus and his family
natural affection had been paralyzed, by, their
attempts to draw him away from the loyalty to the
command of God.- But however it may have
been in this special case, domestic tragedies
are frequent enough in the world of to day.
'Tis of blood so become sometimes the most
galling and degrading chains. Between many
a father and son- mother and daughter- ~~a~~ between
many children of the same parents. There exists almost
the repulsion of hate- and at best they possess
only some outward show of union and agreement
for the purpose of baffling scandal. I know that
a people who have lived always in an atmosphere
of love, and seen little of life outside the

evils in which they have moved. This seems incomprehensible. - Nevertheless it is all too lamentably true. King Lear was not altogether a creation of the Poets fancy. More than one father has been just as bitterly disappointed in his children, and has had equal cause to curse their ingratitude. ~~The first born~~ Cain's was not the only heart which has ~~been~~ planned evil against a brother ~~Orlando and his brother does but typify~~ nor his the only hand raised to take a brothers life.

By these facts We are led to observe that bodily Kinship is only an accidental and artificial bond which does not necessarily carry with it mental or spiritual affinity. Not indeed that it is inconsistent therewith. But that a family union maintained only by the bond of natural affection stands upon very slender foundation. If between our children ~~sometimes~~ there is harmony of temper & thought and purpose, we have reason to be profoundly grateful. But it by no

means follows that because we have children
such harmony will exist. - In what then does
true kinship consist? If even a Mothers
affection may turn to indifference or hate,
where shall be found a vital and lasting
relation? - By virtue of what bond is the ideal
family bound up into a living unit, and
upon what common ground may men & women
everywhere stand together to fulfill the common
purposes of social life? -

Let me ask your attention to the answer
implied in these words of Christ. - whosoever shall
do the will of my Father which is heaven the
same is my Brother and Sister and Brother. -

They mean that all genuine fellowship is
of the Spirit, and is based in goodness. -
a meaning which as I apprehend may be worth
some consideration. - That ~~it~~ some people
are gifted with an attractiveness which seems

to bear no relation to their character, and which we designate by the poorly understood and indefinite ~~term~~ adjective magnetic, it would be folly to deny. That hero of the sensational novel who is guilty of the blackest crimes and has not a generous impulse in his whole nature, who yet by a horrible fascination compels the good and pure to worship at his feet, is an exaggerated type of something that has actual existence. There is a mere bodily affinity and bodily repulsion, which to a certain extent explains people's likes and dislikes for each other. They may be drawn and held together for a time by some charm of person or manner which has nothing ~~to~~ to do with moral qualities - and which indeed may sometimes atone for a plainly perceived lack of moral life.

In a certain sense it might be maintained that such a relation stands upon obedience

to the will of God. For God is infinite beauty as well as infinite goodness.- Every beautiful thing is an expression of his nature, as truly as every good and noble thing.- Most people worship largely through this sense of beauty, and are drawn quite as strongly toward the beauty dwelling in material things, as toward the finer qualities of mind. It is not thereforo strange that the brilliant but soulless glance of an eye should so often take captive strongly sentional natures, or that an influence very mysterious but which probably consists mainly in physical charms should have so much to do in forming our associations.- It is not in itself an evil influence at all,- but rather so far as it goes, is the power of God compelling us to worship that beauty which is our expression of himself. Beauty has its own language, and through it the love of God may become intelligible

5 to human souls, - Its service being in a degree the service of God. They who are mutually held by its attractions, may be said to find their relationship through obedience to the Divine will. - But this may perhaps seem like smuggling a meaning into the text which it was never designed to cover; - and I suppose, Jesus did mean, that through goodness rather than through beauty, through any accident of birth or through any other quality or means, human souls must find their true Kindred. - If we find that in actual life this worship of beauty & serves to establish many existing relationships, it remains to be said, that they are exceedingly brittle, subject to innumerable influences which work their destruction, and are while they endure not particularly ennobling. Not only so bodily charms fade, but this attractive power is so dependent

upon mood and circumstance, that nothing more than a most fickle and uncertain bond can result from them,- Even the worship of beauty in its purest forms does not greatly strengthen character,- Art is a luxury rather than a refining power,- It can never be made sufficiently intellectual to reach the deep springs of thought and action. Rome when she stood at the very height of artistic excellence was also deepest in moral degradation, much less does the charm of a pure beauty which fails to reach the perfection of an artists ideal, draw those who are held by its spell into any higher living.

The subtle affinity, about which sentimentalists of all periods have raved, and which for a time at least seems to have led away even so great a mind as that Goethe's- is no more a trustworthy bond of union than the lightning which darts from cloud to cloud.

6 Any mere blind sentiment of regard - which finds people to its liking and knows not why, serves no better purpose in establishing true and permanent relations, than descent from a common ancestor.

Let us then fall back upon the text, and see what promise it contains of revealing the true source of Kindred. - To do the will of God was certainly not in Christs thought to comply with any so called outward revelation of the divine command. - God was to Jesus Synonomous with goodness, and the fellowship of those who love the right for its own sake, is what he would call the highest and only vital bond of Union. That is to say no regard for another, is based upon any sure foundation - except it be based upon an intelligent perception of qualities of mind worthy of regard. and the sentiment growing

out of such a perception, is the purest strongest, sweetest tie, which knits human souls together.- The moral or religious force is the ~~only~~ cohesive force of mind, and the degree of its power determines every other the reality and strength of human relationships. Every bond, ~~however it~~ under whatever circumstance it may be ~~or~~ created, in family business or social life, is true and enduring just so far as it expresses the kinship of righteousness.- This truth has something more than a speculative interest for us, and I do not propose to set forth any speculative line of argument as its proof. Indeed if we remember that it does not shut out, but rather explains the fine play of sympathy and deep emotion, it will need no proof. While there is an chords of being deeper than consciousness, which vibrate in

7 response to a presence not understood. If but only felt, such sympathy is at best a pitiful flickering flame.- Love is so full and free as that between souls which consciously think the same thoughts live the same life, and behold in each other an ideal excellence. There is something very seductive in the doctrine that a soul instinctively recognizes its Kindred, and instantly leaps forth to clasp it in bonds of affection.- There is also in it something true, for we possess ~~rapid~~ ~~faculties~~ rapid faculties, which far outstrip the slow understanding in concluding what is worth of character. Nevertheless it is accordingly unsafe to trust to first impressions as a basis of relations, and though it savors more of the prosaic, it is wiser to apply the tests of genuine coin. than to trust the glitter which covers both the false and true.- The affection born of insight

if of slower growth, and less electric in its thrill - than the wild and feverish youthful love, is steadier, holier, and far more delightful. Let the Husband & Wife whose love the years have ripened, say whether they would exchange for the passionate Joy they once felt in each other's presence - the deep and quiet currents of sympathy established by closer Knowledge each of the others Character. Out of the experiences which reveal the heroism self-sacrifice - and faith dwelling in the depths of our companions spirit, comes the highest and only true love. The human soul is not a Natural race to be held an unconscious or unwilling captive by magnetic force. It is a child of God's love, made to adore that goodness which is its light and its life - its strength and health - a flower may be swayed by the wind but it opens its petals and unfolds its beauties only at the bidding of that

8 ~~Sad~~ sunlight which called it into existence

Ours were a wretched plight if every gust of passion shuffled us into new relations as if society were a pack of cards. There is a texture, a fibre in social life, and ~~the~~ substance of that fibre is goodness. - Though no other power are we united in ties of kindred, across no other wires of communication runs the fire of heavenly love from soul to soul. - Evil is to us a black void, neither into which nor through which can we see any channel of love and sympathy. - At the least there must be some appearance of light and reality - some livery of heavenly beauty to clothe the darkness, before our affections will move from their sleep. If it be nothing but a livery of light, which has led them forth, they soon pierce the show, and appalled by the breath of sepulchral gloom which issues forth, they return

disappointed, if not half dead. to fill with rankling poison the mind they ought to bless.- Nothing but the sterling reality of goodness, answers the souls craving for an object of affectionate regard. They who do the will of God. and they alone can be to us brother and sister & mother.- ——— There are many practical lessons to be drawn from this truth. and not least in importance is a lesson we may carry into our homes.- For it will not do to assume that family ties will stand without or in place of this Kind of spirit.- Too many homes are wrecked by a negligent reliance upon bonds of nature and circumstance.- The young wife or husband too often fancies that the mere sensual attractiveness which may have drawn them together, will serve to preserve entire harmony between them. No trust could be inadequately founded.- What a great boon might one confer

9 upon the world, if he could make all who
enter ~~upon~~ into the marriage relation see, that
they can only win and keep the regard of the
friend they have chosen for life, by making
themselves ~~worthy~~ worthy on heart and life of regard.
Sooner or later, the mind gets behind the
appearance in another ~~life~~, which first attracts
its attention. - Woe then, to all existing relations
between them. if when it should find a
reason goodness and beauty, it comes upon
blank emptiness, or hideous shapes of sin and
death. - I say woe to that home evermore, in
which such a discovery is made, unless the
discoverer possess a rare courage and insight
which at last finds its way to a deeper
manhood and womanhood which can be
~~reverenced~~ revered and loved. - Young men will not
find the household a centre of attraction
simply because there are father Mother &

sister - unless Father Mother & Sister are very careful to show them the best and most winning side of their natures. - We often hear lament over the low tastes which lead young men away from home influences into evil courses. But I am convinced that in the majority of cases they are led away by the very superiority of their tastes, because the generous impulses they find in thoughtless companions who tamper with vice - if not a very high or satisfactory reflection of the divine goodness is at least better than selfishness and fastidiousness and reaction at home. Young people have not often the insight or experience which would fit them to seek beneath a forbidding reserve for lovable qualities, and the responsibility of attaching them to the nobler forms of goodness is thrown upon us. - If we would have them love and respect us, it is we must never grow careless or indifferent of the impression we leave

10 upon them, but must be always at special pains to show them such greatness in ourselves as will win their affections.

But the application of the text, that I more especially wish to make is of wider import. Having said that every true relation between individual souls grows out of their common obedience to the laws of God. I ever desire to say that the Church, at least as an ideal institution if not in actual fact, stands squarely on that relation. Gentile and Jew bond and free, high and low, all these names and distinctions based upon ~~the~~ mere bodily relations, lose their significance within the compass of a living Church. In uniting to create a spiritual organization ~~the~~ we can unite only in the spirit of righteousness and truth. This shows at once the vast superiority of the Church ~~as~~ as it ought to be

over every other institution, and the very sad inferiority of what is often named the Church.- It is the only organization which by the very aim of its existence tends to establish and strengthen this true kindred among men.- I do not mean to say that the mother is entirely given over into its hands. The laws of God are not thus dependant upon human help.- There was goodness in the world before ever the Church was dreamed of, and therefore a fellowship of the spirit. I do not mean to say that no other institution is helpful in this direction, but that the main purpose of all others has to do with outward concerns, and you can no more unite men through their external affairs, than into one you can make one wood and iron grow together by binding them together with a clasp. Two men may do business together for long years, and in the end have no stronger regard for each other than when they first met,- save as this is true;

11 that they may find opportunity to study each others
characters, and so foster between themselves a brotherly
feeling. It will be through goodness of soul, not
through the identity of their business interests,
that the men themselves will come together if at all. - There is
no possibility of union upon a bad or
indifferent purpose - and this is the advantage
which good has over evil. However men may
combine to further ends which have in them no
moral or an immoral element, they are
only held together by a rope of sand. - The strength
of every vital organization lies in its service
of Gods righteousness, and in nothing else.

This the Church ought to fully recognize. The
sole pretext for its existence is that it serves
for a help in relating men to each other and
to God through goodness. Alas! that it is
so often degraded into a mere stepping stone
or prop to social rank; that so often it is made

the cloak under whose respectable covering men prey upon the unwary:- that offensive of all it should only minister to that sense of beauty, which as has been said does not foster the spirit of brotherly love. The Church as yet, very ~~keenly~~ simply apprehends the mission upon which God sent his Christ into the world, and called it to ~~make~~ spread abroad the Knowledge of his Gospel. Instead of making Known to men their Kindred, it has all to largely helped to perpetuate artificial causes of separation already existing, and create new sources of dissension. But if the Church ~~has~~ of history has proven unfaithful to her trust, it remains true that Kindred of the Spirit creates the only living and helpful Church:- and this, if you will consider what has gone before the staging which has led us up to it, is the thought I desire to leave in your minds.

Where two or three are gathered together in my

12 name, said Jesus, there am I in the midst of them. — ~~There~~ Two or three who are bound together through love of holiness, - not only find therein the most perfect bond of sympathy & communion, but have among themselves all the elements of a Church of God, - They are united by something stronger than creeds or self interest, and their union has a depth of meaning and power to be found in no other worldly relation, Though the three become many, and support the forms of public worship, they gain a higher church only in degree, not in kind,

We say this is not a religious or Church going period - and so far as the external life is concerned, the charge is true, - But if we mean to say that as compared with other Eras, this Spiritual Church has lost its power, I apprehend that the charge is utterly false, -

Despite all that appears upon the surface of

life, I do not believe there ever was a time when goodness possessed a deeper hold upon the life of the race - or better served to bring them into true and pure relations. - There have been times when religious thought and faith found a ~~ea~~ readier expression - and clearer definition, But never was there more religious thought and faith, struggling for some ~~kind~~ expression and definition. - You will notice that children talk very readily of God. - but that as they grow older they shrink from the subject - and only after long silent thinking lose again this reticence. - So the childish era of the race is the theological and ecclesiastical period - when men are profuse in expressing their thought about the Deity. Following that must come a period of earnest silent thought, in which the old forms die away and religion has not much place or power in external life. Then I should say is

13 when the Modern world ever stands, If we look inward to find the Church it had ever more vitality, though in any recognizable form it comes less to the surface of affairs. ——

The Newspapers bring to our notice many subjects of righteous wrath, and forgetting how large the world is, it sometimes seems that all of it outside ~~of~~ our circle of acquaintance is given over to evil. — But we can all of us look into the souls of men & women with whom we are acquainted — and behold more of that goodness which holds our admiration and love, than was ever given to man to see before, and when we remember that one or two disturbances out of every such sphere as that in which we move — when counted together fully make up the list of the notable sinners of this generation, we may perhaps realize that the love and practice of righteousness is not deported or departing from men.

Here then we see the church of this present time, in the union between minds which results from the growing establishment of Divine goodness in human hearts. - Into this church whosoever shall enter friendless and alone will find Kindred and love. - Above all other ties and through all other relations, the fellowship of righteous souls must find expression, or they are worthless. - Yea! and did not Jesus say, Whoso doeth the will of God - shall be my brother and sister and Mother? Not through acceptance of dogmas, or observance of forms. But through the bond of God's righteousness, may we claim the highest Kindred, with him and with Every noble heart. —